LAUCKS FOUNDATION

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As a public service, Laucks Foundation calls attention to published material that might contribute toward clarification of issues affecting world peace, equity among peoples and environmental responsiblity.

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The articles on Pages 2 to 7 , inc.. are reprinted in response to interest expressed by some of our readers in the writings of the late Henry Geiger, founder, editor and publisher of ***MANAS****. The quote below, taken from "A Hope Confirmed" in the September 5, 1951 issue, indicates what Geiger had in mind when he started publication of MANAS.*

"From the beginning, the editors have hoped that in MANAS might be found, for a considerable number of people throughout the world, at least the beginning of a basis in thought for effective if unorganized idealism. The end of all thought, as Carlyle observed, is an act, but the world is so torn and agonized by actions taken without thought that there is certainly room for a publication which lays its greatest emphasis upon understanding, as the prerequisite to intelligent action."

(Reprinted from MANAS April 14, 1954, pp. 6-7)

The Strain of Progress

THERE is one thing that the enthusiast of human progress must face, and that is that the people who are content without struggling after progress, who do their work dutifully and happily, but without ambition, often know far more of the graces of living than the anxious and restless ones who dream about a utopian tomorrow. There seems to be a quiet gentility about all the people of an old and static culture—a culture, even, that is pervaded by theological deceptions which have become time-honored and as natural as the roads, the hills, and the sky. Perhaps the dogmas of religion, after centuries, are somehow "naturalized" by simple people, somewhat as an old ruin is overtaken by wild growths which lend to the useless structure a quaintly pleasing charm. Nature, we think, has had her way, and we accept the process, as we accept other inevitabilities of life. And we think that it would be something of an impudence for a crew of men to come along and erect a bright new building to replace it, bringing along with "progress," odors of fresh mortar, the scream of saws and the banging of hammers. We prefer, perhaps, that well enough be left alone.

And so with the beliefs of the people who live in the shadow of ancient ruins. They seem a suitable thing, even though by book and reason it would be so easy to prove them "wrong."

Perhaps there are spots on earth, whole countrysides, which find themselves set aside as memorials to the timeless aspect of existence. Among such people, the man with new ideas is truly an intruder. He is out of place. His truth, however important, is nonetheless irrelevant. Not "progress" and enlightenment, but something else, is being worked out there. He should depart to a place where the anguish and disturbance which accompany the breakup of a traditional society have some hope of being balanced by a new vision which makes the pain worth while.

Too often, the apostles of progress break in upon the quiet ritual of simple living, as though human beings have nothing to learn from living as their fathers taught them. The time will doubtless come when every traditional society will die, but there is a sense in which every death should be permitted to come by natural cause. Too often the man of progress imagines that because he sees a glow on the horizon, he has the right and the duty to waken every dreamer, to take by the shoulders the man enwrapped in meditation, and make him listen to the gospel.

But what do we know, really, of the secret processes of human life? Of the sacred metabolism of unchanging customs and ways? Is there perhaps some deep instruction being gained by these means? Do the people of such communities perchance assimilate the proceeds of some arduous advance of which we know nothing?

This is more than a question merely of material progress. It is a question rather of learning patience. For we must be content with patience, since we cannot possibly have knowledge concerning the times and rates of human awakening. The man of widely progressive generalizations is always vulnerable to the charge of being impatient, for he too easily overlooks the many levels at which an appropriate human maturity may be reached. He condemns an age for its sleepy indifference to great issues which hover in the wings of history. The real point, however, for the historian may be that the quiet interludes of history have their own contribution to make, even if simple and undramatic, so far as we can see.

Of late, the scholars who devote themselves to the study of human societies have been much impressed by the quality of American Indian communities which have been pursuing their ancestral ways for a thousand years or more, with little or no change save for that pressed upon them by the invading and surrounding Anglo-Saxon culture. These Indians, some of them, at least, are plainly not going anywhere, yet from the character of their lives there seems to be a sense in which they long ago "arrived." This is naturally puzzling to scientific representatives of a civilization that is practically breathless from all the progress it has been making. The odd part of it is that neither culture—neither the static and traditional, nor the restless and dynamic—is very good at explaining or justifying itself. Each

looks at the other with a little untutored envy and amazement. Both, actually, are pursuing intuitively justified convictions. The one feels itself to be a preserver of the good, the other a discoverer, and neither can in conscience abandon its calling.

There is one real difference between the traditional cultures and the massively progressive cultures of the world. The traditional cultures are usually uniform and in a sense "pure." They cannot sustain or contain in their midst an alien progressive element. The rebel has no role in a traditional culture whose time has not yet come to die. He would break the pattern too soon. He has the unhappy character of a violator of innocence, of a teacher of precocious and even corrupting doctrines. The progressive culture, on the other hand, is spotted all over the islands of traditionalism. Everywhere may be found pitched battles between the generations, the conflict of iconoclast with conservative, with citadels of the past being erected to protect the timid against change, and battering rams being mounted by other men to force an entry for what they hope is progress. It is the rush and flurry of the drive for progress which shuts out knowledge of the values which traditional societies continue to preserve until their hour arrives.

While the traditional society exhibits to the critical eye all sorts of defects and limitations in terms of *system,* it is this society, strangely enough, which allows a definite individuality to single human beings, within the limits of the system. The progressive society, on the other hand, filled with the anxieties of a struggle to reach some far-off goal, tends to destroy individuality in a wild attempt to organize progress for *everybody.* Then, when members of a progressive society begin to recognize this folly, comes the great discovery of the virtues of traditionalism, serene living, and peace.

It is at this point, we may suppose, that the society reaches a crisis in human decision. It is then that the simple faith of our fathers is painted in the most alluring colors, that the aimless strivings of modern man are most easily exposed and ridiculed. And it is then that men have the need, not to abandon the idea of progress, but to redefine it in terms of worthier ideals.

The following is an excerpt from "The Humane Temper" MANAS May 30, 1951:

What is the humane temper? It is difficult to define. Essentially, perhaps, it is the respect for human beings, not merely as units of a political order, but as sensitive intelligences, as beings capable of compassion, sympathy, generosity, and understanding. The man of humane temper does not require infallible dogmas to live by. He thrives on a kind of uncertainty—that is, he is sure that the human race needs to remain uncertain about matters which are naturally obscure in intellectual terms, and which require a special sort of serenity to be successfully discussed.

What the humane temper is not is more easily established. An article on censorship in the May *Progressive* (an exceptionally fine issue of this magizine) by Nathan Glick, repeats the observations of David Reisman, a lawyer turned sociologist, on this subject. Mr. Reisman was approached by a movie producer's representative who sought the former's approval of the film, *Home of the Brave.* Wasn't the picture good for "race relations," and worthy, therefore, of endorsement? Mr. Reisman countered with a question of his own: Did the producer's representative think *Symphonie Pastorale,* a beautiful and compassionate film based on the novel by André Gide, was good for race relations? The rest is in Reisman's words:

> He did not understand me—what did this movie about a pastor's family tragedy have to do with race relations? In his attitude, he patronized both his own craft of movie-making and the movie audience: he assumed that people get out of a movie a message as simple as the fortune-teller's printed slip in a penny arcade. The notion that the art form itself, over a period of time, could affect *the quality of American life,* and hence of its race relations, is forgotten in anxious concern for the presumed immediate results. This producer's representative did not ask himself what kinds of movies he himself enjoyed seeing, but looked at his product from the stance of an outsider—this is the hallmark of the public relations approach. But it is evident that a person who seems only to patronize others also patronizes his own human reactions and, while he thinks he manipulates the emotions of the audience, also manipulates, and eventually causes to evaporate his own emotions.

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BROAD VIEWS

THERE comes a time in the development of a civilization or a culture—as in the life of individuals—when it begins to show an interest in what may be called "broad views." This tendency may be similar to the preoccupation with "art" manifested by a wealthy businessman after he has made his pile—or, for that matter, his preoccupation with "religion," when he is no longer active in the commercial struggle. On the other hand, it may be like the genuine and natural elevation of the spirit which comes to a man after a lifetime of intensely constructive activity.

Something like this tendency, at any rate, has been noticeable in the United States during recent years. Perhaps the country is growing into some sort of maturity; or, which is as likely, the succession of national crises since the second decade of the century—first war, then depression, then war again, and now, finally, ominous threat of another great conflict—has precipitated a kind of pseudo-maturity in which the urgencies of fear have heaped more responsibilities upon us than we know how to bear with intelligence and dignity.

The new advocacy of "religion," for one thing, has a suspiciously pragmatic aspect. Politicians and industrialists who have no personal interest in religion make honorific references to "God" with increasing frequency, and it is doubtless some odd version of social responsibility which causes the outdoor advertising concerns to cover otherwise vacant billboards with the pious counsel, "Attend a church of your choice every Sabbath." Not longings for spiritual insight, but a practical estimate of the organizational binding power of church affiliations is behind this new appreciation of religion.

One could say of these would-be pillars of society that, having completed successful careers in making money, or gaining fame, they now would like to expand into what they regard as Well-Rounded Persons, but because they are by habit and experience only specialists, they tend to suppose that the Well-Rounded Person is a man who knows what is good for other people—for "the masses"—and so, like amateur psychoanalysts, they begin to prescribe proper doses of religion, and, perhaps, "Americanism," also, as in their judgment what the people "need."

Any religion dealt out in "doses," of course, is spurious, and the same is true of Americanism, so long as it is "administered" by fuzzy-minded paternalists, instead of being a natural growth in appreciation of what opportunities for usefulness and freedom come to those who are Americans by accident of birth. Neither religion nor patriotism ought to be regarded as a specific for a pleasure-seeking population afflicted by restless insecurity. A truly religious man is a man determined to discover the meanings which may lie behind the contradictions and anomalies of human existence, and a patriot is one who shares in some measure the vision of the founders of his country, and who presses that vision onward to far-reaching social ideals. To attempt to "use" religion and love of country for any lesser purposes than these is to practice subversion on a grand scale—is, in fact, the method consciously pursued by the practitioners of totalitarian psychology. This is probably what Huey Long meant when he said that if Fascism comes to the United States, it will be called "democracy."

Actually, what we proudly call Democracy can survive only among people who learn to live their lives as whole men, avoiding the distortions which come from excessive specialization. So long as the United States was predominantly agricultural, the experiences of most of the population had to do with the elements of nature. Living in obvious and immediate dependence upon nature has a profoundly ameliorating effect upon the distortions in which men indulge themselves. It is difficult, for example, to conceal parasitism on a farm. Neuroticism, we suspect, has natural correctives in the daily round of duties which an agrarian society provides, although this is becoming less true today, now that family-size farms provide only a precarious existence and the food of the great majority of the hundred and fifty million people of the United States is supplied by vast, mechanized agricultural operations. These "factories in the field" are presided over by men who study the commodity market reports every morning—the "windshield farmers," as they are called in California, who can barely drive around their enormous holdings in a day or so.

The separation of the American population into subdivided and specialized ways of life is clearly illustrated by the common speech of the time. There are those, for example, for whom the expression, "He's a good businessman," is the highest possible praise. Others would like to be known as "socially-minded," and if anyone were to inquire about their business capacities, they would feel considerably insulted. Still another segment bandies about the phrase "creative person." Often, this means no more than that the individual honored by this description has a gift for thinking up clever advertising slogans. Then there is the category of "deeply religious" people, who sometimes give the impression that persons unlike themselves might just as well have been left out of the cosmos entirely.

These are only a few of the specialties in which men pursue distinction. The largest category, perhaps, is that of the "businessman," who is, after all, a productive citizen and one who has followed with practical industry the ideals put before him at home and in school. The businessman has a clear idea of personal "success," and probably, in the United States, more businessmen have achieved something approximating "success" than anywhere else in the world. But while the businessman knows what *he* wants, his conception of the "good society" is usually based on arrangements which will allow him to get what he wants, and as quickly as possible. He has, in short, given very little serious thinking to what a really "good society" would be like, except in relation to some sort of commercial Utopia. When society begins to show signs of crumbling from internal weak-

ness, or when the anxieties produced by threat of war affect his personal interests, he wonders what "ought to be done," but mostly he gives utterance to complaints about government, the schools, the tax rate, and the "subversives" who criticize the status quo.

In contrast, the "socially-minded person" is often deeply contemptuous of the pursuits of "business." He is largely concerned with "changing the system," and sees no reason to admire those who are keeping the present system going. He is oppressed by the thought of the millions of small and large manufacturers, dealers, storekeepers, salesmen, construction engineers, technologists and others who work hard throughout their lives, and who feel that after putting in eight conscientious hours a day, they have done their part. To state the matter simply, the moral obligations of the businessman are established by the historic conception of the virtues—honesty, veracity, industry, sobriety, charity—as applied through the various human relationships which are determined by the socio-economic system under which we live. But now comes a critic, not of this practice of the virtues, but of the system itself. What good are the traditional virtues, he argues, when the system which governs their expression is intrinsically unjust?

The extreme of this argument is heard in the voice of the Marxist revolutionary who rejects what he calls "bourgeois morality" entirely, and is willing to use any form of deceit in order to undermine the structure of the present society. The convinced communist has eliminated any personal moral problem by transforming morals into a department of politics, and by joining a political party in which the only recognized morality lies in blind and absolute obedience to the party line. It is the "moderates" in the field of social-mindedness who still struggle with a personal moral problem in connection with the country and society of which they form a part. How can they feel themselves to be useful, constructive human beings, so long as they agree in some measure with the "radicals" that the present economic system is intrinsically unjust?

People sometimes wonder why there are so many people of apparently "radical" persuasion in education, in the professions, and in civil service. Plainly, the explanation lies in the disgust felt by the intelligent intellectual for commercial enterprise as presently conducted. This further explains the witch-hunting temper of some businessmen and politicians who have no capacity to grasp the social criticisms coming from the members of our society who have deliberately avoided business careers for the reasons given.

There is the further problem of the man of social awareness who has not been attracted by education or the professions, yet has need of making a living for himself and his family. What view can he take of commercial enterprise? One solution sought by persons of this persuasion is a return to the land. Granting the obvious romanticism of this solution, it still holds considerable value for individuals who have an exceptional aptitude for hard work and who are sensitive to the natural mysticism of a life close to the soil. Others have taken up crafts and similar pursuits marginal to our highly technological economy. But rare and peculiar talents are required for even modest success in such enterprises, and there remains the question, Can there be a constructive approach to commercial activity—an approach which does not compromise the social idealism of individuals who want to devote their energies to human betterment?

This is a basic consideration—that of recognizing that so long as human beings live together in communities, certain services and goods must be supplied for the maintenance of the community. Food, shelter, clothing, transportation and communication—these, at least, are genuine necessities, and even the idyllic desert island community of our dreams will have to have most of them. And so long as we continue to use the technologies which are presently available for the manufacture of these goods and the provision of these services, many elements of the present pattern of economic integration will remain.

A free society will be the result of the lives of free and whole men, and the "system" which serves a free society well is only the consequence, never the cause, of the freedom that everyone desires. Actually, the task of developing or preserving a free system lies in making the best possible use of the freedom we already have—not in planning great changes and waiting for the day when they will be instituted, in order to make us free. "Business," it is true, is shot through with inequitable practices and acquisitive tendencies, but there are businesses which perform fundamental economic functions as well as those which exploit human weakness, vanity, and self-indulgence. It is better to make bricks than liquor; house paint has a legitimate use, even if most cosmetics do not.

A man can *choose* a business; and the better businessman he becomes in his chosen activity, the less vulnerable he is to the sharp practices, the petty dishonesties and injustices which have so largely earned the contempt of socially minded people for the business community.

In a human society, changes do not come about from the application of revolutionary blueprints, but from the ingenious application of intelligent ideals by countless individuals who form the warp and woof of genuine culture. Reliance on a proposed "system" is a delusive way to seek reform; actually, faith in systems produces more and more powerful reaction, because it mistakes effect for cause and thus eliminates the sources of creative activity in individuals.

But intelligent idealism is possible only for whole men—for men who see no contradiction between being a good businessman and a "socially minded" human being; who understand that the creative act is the socially useful and educative act; and who seek their religion in an understanding of the hearts of their fellow men.

The following is an excerpt from TURNING THE CENTURY: Personal and Organizational Strategies for Your Changed World, by Robert Theobald (Knowledge Systems, Inc., Indianapolis, IN. 46231. 1992.) Reprinted with the permission of the author.

Seeing everything as politics

The essential revolution which has to take place if we are to resolve the crisis of governance now afflicting us is to broaden our definition of politics. Politics should not be thought of only as the thoughts and actions of our elected officials. Rather we must understand it is the sum total of our actions as they affect our collective decision-making. Our purchases are political. Our commitment to our church, and feelings about its involvement in the world, are political. Our activities to support, or ignore, education are political. Our attitudes toward the poor, and the dispossessed, are political.

Citizens, moving together, make the waves which define political options. Politicians merely ride them, often changing their opinions to make sure they are re-elected. The critical part of the political process is not the decisions on issues which have already been surfaced. Rather it is the effort which is given to surfacing new questions. The movement to ban smoking has been a highly significant political effort. So has the recognition that our health and education systems are deeply flawed.

For too long, we have been concentrating on what happens in Washington, DC and the various state capitols. Our challenge today is to learn how to help people change their ideas of appropriate directions and their self-interest. All of us who are interested in developing a better world need to discover how to help people move beyond their current definitions of their self-interest. . .

There are three primary necessary steps as we move from industrial-era to compassionate-era institutions and communities. The first is to build trust and relationships. Industrial-era systems are meant to operate on logic, structure and hierarchy. Compassionate-era systems operate on hunch, perception and, even, "magic." At a recent meeting, where companies were taking the first steps toward a supplier council and talking to each other about how to cooperate, the word "magic" was frequently used to describe the effectiveness of interactions after trust had developed.

As people learn to work and play together, levels of activity and performance rise dramatically. Many people are today ready to commit to trust and relationships but there are few places in our current society where they can "try their wings." . . .

The second step is to create the new ideas and structures which are needed for the future. When people trust each other, they are willing to say what they really think and believe. This is the raw material for new ways of seeing the world. Creativity provides the potential for totally novel understandings of how we can create equity in the world. It permits us to break out of the obsolete ideologies which are still controlling our world and preventing us from seeing the new opportunities, and dangers, which surround us...

The third step is to create effective action. "Partnerships" are a good way to support new directions. The various "players" in a situation get together and decide to come up with action steps they can all accept. These partnership models are only effective if people have already been through the stages of trust-building and creativity within their own systems. Partnerships require that people are honest with each other in terms of what they want and what the politics of their systems are. In addition, partnerships demand that people know how to look for novel solutions rather than be blocked by their current ideological thinking...

One of the most critical needs of our time is to make it clear within each system, and the culture as a whole, that innovators and leaders will be respected and honored. This change of emphasis would be of great value to those who have devoted their lives to bringing about fundamental change. Perhaps one can look forward to the day when those who have struggled to build a just society will get as much attention as athletes!

"Skepticism is not a natural expression of human beings, but a reaction to repeated betrayal."

Quoted from "Problems of the True Believer", **MANAS**, June 20, 1951.

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